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ABSTRACT

The report on recurrent education in Denmark is one of a series describing continuation education in OECD member countries. Intended as a means of liberating individuals from the education-work-leisure-retirement sequence, recurrent education provides freedom to mix and alternate these phases of life within the limits of the socially possible. Chapter I provides background information on the Danish educational system and the problems caused by educational expansion after 1950, such as a widening educational gap between generations and a surplus of highly qualified manpower. Chapter II describes reforms and reform proposals at the secondary and higher education levels. I chapter III, existing elements of a recurrent education system are discussed: (1) leisure time education which can lead to qualifications for further study; (2) vocational education, including general education for workers, updating technological skills, occupational promotion education, and courses to facilitate inter-occupational mobility; and (3) further education of teachers. Chapter IV identifies inflexibility, tradition, and vested interests as major problems in financing recurrent education. Chapter V identifies key elements of a strategy for recurrent education as reapportionment of finances, public awareness, reform of upper-secondary education, creation of experimental programs, offering of courses at places of work, and establishment of loans with income-related repayment. (Author/DB)

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RECURRENT EDUCATION

POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT IN OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES

DENMARK

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OECD
ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI)

RECURRENT EDUCATION

POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT IN OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES

DENMARK

by

Berrit HANSEN

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PREFACE

Recurrent education, on which CERI has been carrying out preparatory work over the last few years, has rapidly become one of the most interesting and promising alternatives for the future development of the educational system and its interaction with the world of work.

Through two recent publications called : Recurrent Education : A Strategy for Lifelong Learning (CERI/OECD, 1973), and Recurrent Education : Trends and Issues (CERI/OECD, 1975), CERI has made explicit the assumptions on which a policy for recurrent education is based and tried to identify its relation to social and labour market policies, as well as presenting an assessment of recent developments in the field.

The essence of the concept is that it distributes education over the lifespan of the individual in a recurring way. This means a development away from the present practice of a long interrupted pre-work period of full-time schooling. It also implies the alternation of education with the individual's other activities in life - principally, of course, his work : but his leisure time and even his retirement might also be included. Hence the essential potential outcome of recurrent education would be the individual's liberation from the strict sequence of education-work-leisure-retirement and his freedom to mix and alternate these phases of life within the limit of what is socially possible and to the satisfaction of his own desires and needs.

At this point, CERI has considered it as essential to endeavour to present the actual developments in Member countries concerning recurrent education. As part of this project on recurrent education CERI is issuing a number of country reports on recurrent education. These reports are intended both to describe existing educational provision which qualifies for classification under the heading of recurrent education, and to attempt an estimation of future developments in this field.

The present report on Denmark will be followed by other reports from OECD Member countries. Reports are already available for Australia, the Federal Republic of Germany, the State of New York, France, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Yugoslavia.

J.R. Gass
Director
Centre for Educational
Research and Innovation

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INTRODUCTION

The preparation of this report has been undertaken as a personal task, although made by an official in the Danish Ministry of Education. It thus puts forward some of the author's own opinions. These, however, are not necessarily in opposition to official policies - indeed, in most cases they cannot be, since up to now no general policy for recurrent education has been laid down in Danish educational planning.

An official report would perhaps have given a more optimistic view of past trends, of what has been done and the possibilities of future reversal from a youth oriented towards a recurrent or lifelong educational system. However, experience of educational planning shows that changing educational patterns is a very lengthy process. Increasing numbers of students and increasing funds seldom reflect better ways of performance or fulfilment of social objectives, while official statements concerning lifelong education especially are often only "paper-tigers" whether they are for national or international use.

The concept of recurrent education as described in the CERI Clarifying Report (1) implies, not only the creation of new educational opportunities for the adult population, but changing patterns in youth education. All pressure groups in the educational system are inclined to welcome the first of these objectives but often oppose the second. To some extent the problem of recurrent education may be considered a problem of redistribution between initial and further education. The result can easily be : either adding a new step to the top of the educational ladder or doing nothing at all because of the limited funds available.

The purpose of this report is to illuminate the Danish educational system as a whole and current educational planning efforts using the concept of recurrent education as a frame of reference.

Chapter One gives an outline of the main features of the Danish educational structure. It describes the ways in which the expansion of upper-secondary and post-secondary education in the '60s and the beginning of the '70s has failed to fulfil general educational objectives and has created new problems. It further explains why it seems so difficult to turn the trend and provide for new priorities.

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1) Recurrent Education : A strategy for Lifelong Learning, CERI/OECD, 1973. See also Recurrent Education : Trends and Issues, CERI/OECD 1975.

Chapter Two is concerned with recent general reforms and reform proposals in youth education - especially in which ways these reforms or proposals are geared towards the recurrent principle.

Chapter Three describes those - still minor - parts of the educational system that could be considered elements in a future system of recurrent education, and how these elements might develop.

The financing of recurrent education is dealt with in Chapter Four. The insufficiency of the youth-grants system for financing adult education is shown and the implications of different proposals of expanded financing of adult education are outlined.

Finally, in Chapter Five some suggestions are given of key elements in a strategy for recurrent education in Denmark.

Chapter I

THE BACKGROUND

1. The Danish educational system

The Danish educational system consists of five major - rather independent - sub-systems. This independence results from each having had an independent historical development. Efforts to co-ordinate the sub-system. is a relatively new phenomenon, and a formal organisational structure for co-ordinated planning has only recently been created.

The sub-systems are the following :

1.1. The elementary school

The "Folkeskolen" is the Danish elementary school comprising the primary and lower-secondary levels of education for all children. It is a 9-year compulsory school (1) starting when the children are 7 years old. Prior to this main school there is a voluntary "kindergarten-class", and after the compulsory level there is a 10th form, by now attended by about 70 per cent of pupils leaving the 9th form.

From the 8th form onwards the pupils are divided in two branches which aspire to different levels in theoretical subjects in the final certificate. Only the higher level gives access to general upper-secondary education.

In Parliament a number of bills for a more comprehensive school at the lower-secondary level have been introduced by former governments. Some reform of this kind was intended when the prolongation of compulsory education was accepted in 1971, but until now disagreement has prevailed upon main issues such as exams and possibilities of choosing different levels of qualification in foreign languages and mathematics. (2)

The development of primary and lower-secondary education will not be dealt with in detail in this report, the main theme of which is a strategy for recurrent education dealing primarily with post-compulsory

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1) Compulsory education was expanded from 7 years to 9 years during the two school years 1972-73 and 1973-74.

2) A bill on this issue passed through Parliament in 1975.

education. At this point, however, it is important to emphasise that the growth of participation at the late levels of the elementary school - in the years before and after the prolongation of compulsory education - has contributed much more to social equality in length of schooling than the growth in upper- and post-secondary education.

This is partly illustrated by the fact that in 1965 only about 80 per cent of the year-group attended the 8th form, 60 per cent the 9th form and less than 30 per cent the 10th form. But this recent increase in school attendance up to the 10th form has naturally widened the educational gap between generations and thus strengthened the need for general adult education.

1.2. General upper-secondary education

The "gymnasium" is the traditional general upper-secondary school of three years' duration conferring qualification (university entrance examination) for university and college studies. The entrance level to the gymnasium is from the 9th form of the elementary school, but very often pupils have gone on to the 10th form before entering. The gymnasium gives free admission for qualified applicants .(1)

For the first year its curriculum is divided into two branches - languages and sciences. Later on, these branches are further subdivided into different lines. The teaching subjects are such as should either be considered preparatory for higher education or of general "cultural" value. A free choice of subjects between branches and lines is not permitted.

Although important innovations have taken place in subjects, teaching methods and evaluation systems, no major reform of the gymnasium has been carried out during the period of expansion since the late 1950s. In 1960 about 9 per cent of an annual generation entered the gymnasium. By now the figure is about 19 per cent. In 1974 a minor decline in the intake occurred - perhaps as a result of the nascent unemployment among graduates from higher education.

In the second half of the '60s a new way of obtaining access to post-secondary institutions was established - "The Higher Preparatory Examination" (HF). The education preparing for the complete examination is a two-year course with no formal admission rules, although the entrance level is generally considered to be the 10th form of the elementary school, and most pupils have in fact completed the 10th form of the more theoretical branch.

In some ways the HF course has replaced a general reform of the gymnasium, for the new education is not divided into branches and lines as in the gymnasium, but gives the pupil a free choice between

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1) Qualifications are evaluated by the "delivering" school.

subjects and different levels of qualification in a modular way, although a fair number of subjects are still compulsory.

The new education has been very popular. Numerus clausus has been necessary, even though the entry capacity by now is expanded to permit an intake corresponding to 9 per cent of an annual generation. The social recruitment to HF is also more equal than the recruitment to the gymnasium. But perhaps its most important feature - at least in regard to recurrent education - is the flexibility of the modular structure which gives better opportunities for introducing new subjects and freedom to take exams in single subjects and combinations of subjects over a period of some years, if desired as part of some other course.

1.3. Upper-secondary vocational education

Parallel to gymnasium/HF, and intended for the same age-group, is the system of basic vocational education. This has emerged from the old system of apprenticeship, and apprenticeship is still the most important feature of the programme.

In recent years periods of school attendance have been of growing importance in apprenticeship, and separate technical and commercial day schools have developed with increasing numbers of pupils and improving quality of teaching. Whereas evening classes used to be dominant, all vocational education nowadays has periods of full time school attendance. The normal apprenticeship is of 3-4 years' duration and about a total of 1 year of this is spent at school.

The vocational schools also have programmes for students who are not in apprenticeship, and those for the education of technicians or of commercial middle management have grown in importance. Such programmes are of one, two or three years' duration. It should be also noted that specific post-secondary education has been established for those with basic vocational education.

To this extent the entire system of vocational education can be considered as a structure giving recurrent education. Nevertheless there is the outstanding problem that vocational education - not only organisationally but also as to flows of pupils - is separate from other branches of upper-secondary and post-secondary education. The labour-market organisations - employers' associations and trade unions - have a very significant influence upon vocational education and almost none on the other branches; in some ways they seem to be inclined to keep the system as a separate one. The total group of young people at the age of sixteen/seventeen is thus finally divided between two systems, and a significant minority (30 per cent of an annual generation) gets neither general nor vocational upper-secondary education.

What is more, in spite of all innovations, vocational education as a whole has had a declining trend in intake of pupils, whereas an educational "explosion" has taken place in general upper-secondary education and university types of higher education.

This trend explains why a major reform in vocational education is now in its first stages of implementation. Apprenticeship is to be abolished and substituted by school education in classes, laboratories and workshops combined with periods of practical training in industry. Instead of a wide variety of apprenticeship programmes, the young people will be allowed to choose between 5-7 different one-year basic programmes - in the business field, in the field of electronics, in construction and so on. The basic year is to be followed by specific programmes of 2-3 years' duration of which a major part will be used for training in industry. General subjects will be strengthened, and it should be possible to prepare for HF exams in single subjects as part of the curriculum.

Experimental programmes along the above lines have been carried out at an increasing rate since the beginning of the '70s. This new education has proved very popular, there being more applicants than intake capacity allows.

In 1976 a revising bill concerning the experimental programmes is to be presented to Parliament. It is expected that this will suggest a plan of expansion leading to a total abolition of traditional apprenticeship by the early 1980s.

A major problem is the financing of the new system during the school periods. Students in the experimental programmes are receiving allowances at the same level as apprenticeship wages financed by the state. These are significantly higher than grants to students in other branches of education.

1.4. Post-secondary education

The institutions of post-secondary education are of two types : universities and other institutions of higher education conferring candidate degrees after study programmes of 5-6 1/2 years' duration- and non-university post-secondary institutions offering study programmes of 3-4 years' duration (for instance, teacher training colleges or engineering colleges).

In 1960 the flow to these two types of institutions corresponded to 13 per cent of an annual generation of young people. By 1975 the proportion had risen to about 30 per cent. Throughout this period, the matriculation rules of the universities have guaranteed that everyone passing either of the upper-secondary final exams can proceed to training for a professional career.

Popularity has differed widely between the two types of post-secondary education, because university programmes are not subject to admission restrictions while almost all the other programmes are. Thus, the flow to the universities has quadrupled between 1960 and 1975 whereas the annual intake to other post-secondary programmes - especially those of short duration - has less than doubled over the same span of time.

In 1974 the universities had an intake corresponding to 13 per cent of an annual generation; nevertheless it is questioned how much importance should be attached to this figure since less than half the number of enrolled students actually achieve graduation. The current records of individuals and the courses they have followed make a decidedly unsatisfactory showing. For example, in the universities' humanities programmes the percentage of completed graduations is only 33. Nevertheless, the average drop-out stays on the register for 5 years while the average length of completed studies is more than 9. Part of the explanation of such records is probably to be found in the system of registration which makes no distinction between active and passive or between full-time and part-time students.

Institutions of a new type - university centres - have been started up in two places, in 1972 and 1974. These form comprehensive institutions offering both medium-term and long-term programmes. The reason for establishing them was partly to create extended opportunities of transfer between programmes to ward off a future continuation of gravitation toward long-term university programmes, and partly to further interdisciplinary studies. Their foundation is also linked with the fact that it is no longer possible to rely on the training of graduates for a few well-defined professions at a time when post-secondary education is evolving from an elite institution into a mass system of education. Post-secondary education is going to meet the needs of a much broader occupational range than previously and this will require programmes that are both wider in scope and more differentiated than the traditional ones.

The question is whether the reforms of higher education have been started too late. The system is facing a major crisis on account of large scale unemployment among graduates, unsatisfactory study-routes, declining financial support and mutual distrust of intentions as between the institutions and the politicians in power.

1.5. Adult education

In the present context adult education is considered to be education aimed at adult people, no special entrance qualifications being required. Viewed in this way, it ought to be both a second-chance system and a system offering education in accordance with actual

demand from the adult population. The educational opportunities can be of a general kind, or may have vocational aims.

In Denmark there is a special tradition of "free" adult education associated with the Folk high schools - that is boarding schools offering adults general education in programmes of 3-10 months' duration. However, these schools are attended for the most part by young adults.

The state also participates in financing leisure time education organised by municipal authorities and private organisations. Until recently the main principle of these educational opportunities has been that they should not offer certificates and that vocational courses should not confer qualifications comparable with those given in the established system. These restrictions have limited the importance of such leisure time education as a second-chance system, but this should not obscure its main purpose which is to respond in a number of flexible ways to a wide variety of educational demands.

The enrolments in leisure time education are very high - adding up countrywide to about 800,000 (1) - but no statistics show the rate of participation among adults and young people. In recent years part-time courses conferring certificates corresponding to some of those given in the elementary and upper-secondary schools have been approved. These courses have had many applicants, but in no way cover the whole field of youth education. When adults want to get a certificate, they usually have to follow the programme for youth education on a full-time basis, and they get the same grants as those given to young people.

An exception to this general rule is a system of short-cycle courses (1-3 months' duration) principally for semiskilled and skilled workers, organised by the Ministry of Labour to improve the mobility of the labour force and to up-date skill and competence. Participants in the courses get allowances related to wages in employment or unemployment benefit. For the moment the system is counteracting fluctuations in levels of employment.

2. Problems of expansion

2.1. Social objectives

The expansion of general upper-secondary and post-secondary education since the end of the 1950s is not directly a result of politically determined objectives. It has, however, met with approval in view of the shortage of highly qualified manpower in the years following, and also because it has been generally considered desirable that the growing affluence of society should find its expression in,

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1) These figures include about 500,000 enrolments in adult programmes and about 300,000 in youth programmes.

among other things, a rising demand for and supply of education. Nevertheless, serious problems have emerged from this expansion and the question is whether it has fulfilled generally accepted social objectives at all. Nobody would dare to rate the advantages of what has been done at zero; but costs, achievements and problems must be compared, at least if we are to learn lessons for the future.

From investigations of educational patterns among the young people since 1965 several questions concerning fulfilment of social objectives in the expansion period can be answered (1) :

First : Has the number of young people getting education after the elementary school - either vocational or general upper-secondary - increased in comparison with those getting none ?

The answer is no, or not significantly. The "rest" group receiving no further education has not decreased and remains at a level of about 30 per cent of an annual generation, while the group entering general upper-secondary education has increased from 11 per cent of a generation in 1965 to 24 per cent in 1971. The increase in enrolment in general upper-secondary education is thus mainly "financed" by a decrease in the numbers entering vocational education.

Second : Which social groups have benefited most from the expansion ?

Children of working-class parents have, of course, increased in absolute numbers and hence in their percentage representation in general upper-secondary education. This is often quoted to show that educational expansion is favouring social equality in education; but, in fact, the growth in educational participation at this level has been much faster in the higher than in the lower social groups. Between 1965 and 1971 the percentage of the year group entering general upper-secondary education rose from 11 to 24 per cent - an increase of 13 per cent. This, however, is an average of an increase of 7 per cent from social group V (e.g. semiskilled workers), 9 per cent from group IV (e.g. skilled workers), 15 per cent from group III, 30 per cent from group II and 9 per cent from social group I.

Thus the educational expansion has mainly benefited children from the higher social groups, while the children of, for example, semiskilled workers have participated less than those from the upper classes. It has been estimated that, even if the expansion of facilities continues at the present rate, social equality in general upper-secondary education cannot be reached before the year 2000.

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1) Reference : Youth-investigations carried out by The Danish Institute of Social Research. A cross-sectional survey from 1965 and a longitudinal research project started in 1968 of a nation-wide sample of Danish youth then in the 7th form of the elementary school.

Another pertinent question is : Has the expansion created more educational equality between boys and girls ?

In answering this question one must bear in mind that inequality in education between sexes mostly concerns access to vocational education. The figure just quoted of about 30 per cent of an annual generation getting neither general upper-secondary nor vocational education is an average of 20 per cent for boys and 40 per cent for girls. In general upper-secondary education the participation rate for boys and girls is about equal. Thus, as long as educational expansion is centred upon general upper-secondary education, inequality between the sexes will continue to remain. The heavy drop-out rates in higher education are also a more serious problem among female students than among males. So, in the matter of future occupational opportunities the women will continue to have an educational handicap. It should be noted that the new experimental programmes in vocational education have a more equal intake as between boys and girls than traditional apprenticeship.

The general conclusion is that expansion in youth education has not contributed in any significant way towards the realisation of general social objectives. It has not reduced the number getting no education after elementary school, nor has it lessened social inequality in access to upper-secondary education or inequality of occupational opportunity as between men and women.

2.2. The educational gap between generations

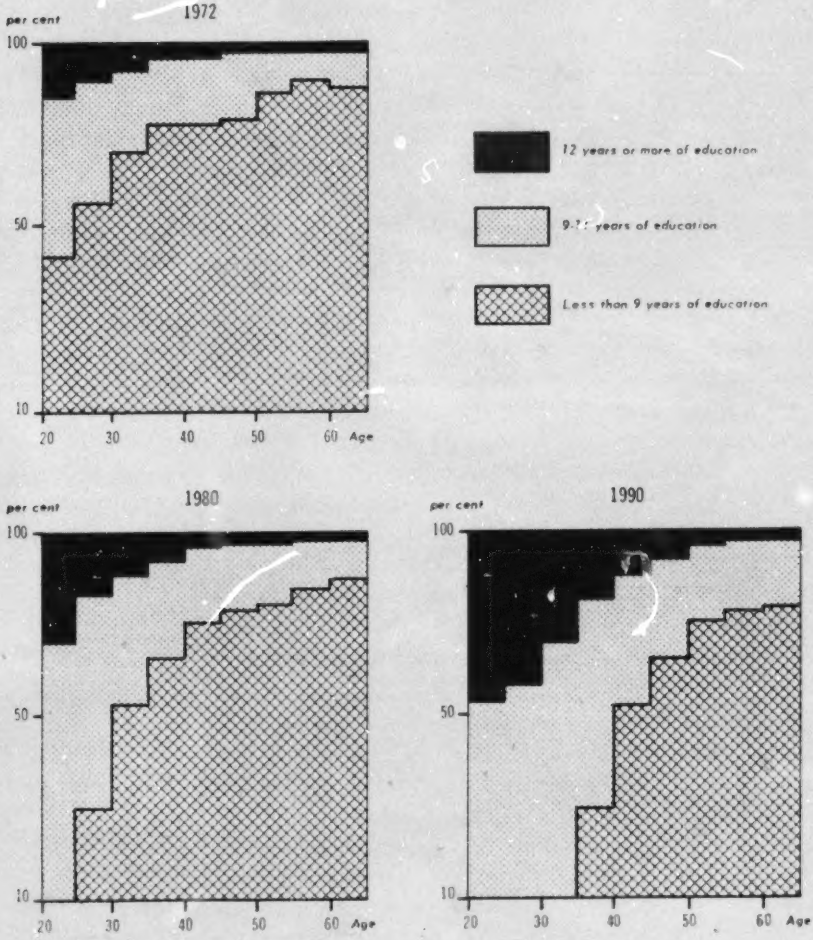
The expansion in upper-secondary education has widened the educational gap between generations. Below is shown how this could continue to widen if the educational expansion continues along the present lines.

The prolongation of compulsory education as from 1972 means that the group with less than 9 years of education will disappear in 1980 among those below 25 years of age and in 1990 among those below 35 years of age. While the distribution of education between age groups in 1972 is reasonably even, the differences in distribution in 1980 and 1990 will be much more dependent on age.

2.3. Surplus supply of highly qualified manpower

Up to now the expansion of general upper-secondary and higher education has had very little effect on the composition of the country's manpower. The time-lag between entry to upper-secondary education and the final examinations in higher education is such that the increase in highly qualified personnel has only been enough to cater for the expansion of the educational system itself and some other departments of the public sector.

DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION[1] AMONG AGE GROUPS IN THE TOTAL POPULATION BETWEEN THE AGE OF 20 AND 64 IN 1972, 1980 AND 1990



1. The figure is from : Carl Norregaard and Erik Jorgen Hansen : "Nogle beregninger over befolkningens skoleuddannelse omkring 1990". The Danish National Institute of Social Research, Copenhagen 1973.

75 per cent of graduates from institutions of higher education and other education above the general upper-secondary level have until now been employed in the public sector. General planning estimates of growth here show that, although this sector will continue to expand, the growth rate will diminish from now until the beginning of the 1980s, as compared with the last 10 years. The annual rate is not expected to exceed about 4 per cent; the annual growth-rate in highly qualified manpower on the other hand, will continue at a level of about 6 per cent. The gap between public sector growth and growth in numbers of graduates is particularly wide for the humanities and social sciences. In these fields the number of graduates employed in the private sector would have to rise at a rate of about 17 per cent annually if their full employment is to be ensured.

No matter how the general employment situation develops, anyone looking at these figures will expect serious unemployment of highly qualified personnel. Great expectations among those starting long-term education in the '60s have been followed by disappointment for those who have newly graduated. It is to be feared that such unemployment will hit female graduates especially. Furthermore, older graduates being unfortunate enough to lose their present job will have to face great difficulty in getting a new one at the same level.

Another result to be feared as a consequence of surplus supply of highly qualified personnel is what has been called the "cuckoo in the nest effect". This means graduates invading occupations traditionally held by those with an education just below university level and for this group too, expectations will be disappointing.

3. The possibilities of changing developments

In the author's opinion, most problems of educational expansion can be related to the structure of the system, i.e. the separation between general and vocational upper-secondary education, and the tradition of long-term higher education as dominant at the post-secondary level. Expansion along old lines, however, is much easier to effect than to open out in new directions.

Firstly, application of the brakes has no effect for quite a number of years. For instance, if intake of new students into the humanities departments of the universities was completely stopped from 1975 until the middles '80s, the total number of graduates would still rise from about 4000 in 1972 to about 12000 in 1987 - a figure far beyond optimistic estimates of demand. An easy conclusion from all this might be that solutions to unemployment problems are so far away that it is not worth the trouble trying to divert the present trend away from long-term higher education.

Secondly, creating a comprehensive or "polytechnic" upper-secondary educational system would also be a very slow process. Teachers are trained for the present system in one of three categories, each with its own union :

i) university-trained teachers for general upper-secondary education;
ii) elementary school teachers from teachers' training colleges (also teaching in the 10th form of the elementary school); and
iii) teachers for vocational education consisting of people with various educational backgrounds and some common short-cycle teacher training.

In the present situation it is difficult to imagine these groups working together in a comprehensive system. So, if reforming upper-secondary education has to await radical changes in teachers' training, such a reform must be a dream of the future.

Thirdly, rising costs are a common feature of reforming activities. Reforms are thus easier to introduce during a general expansion than during a period of reduction in public expenditure. In the Danish situation it can be feared that the next decade will be one of very heavy restrictions on finance for education. The key word in Danish political debates at the moment is public saving so, if reforms are inevitably associated with rising costs, a period without major reform activities must be foreseen.

This rather pessimistic outlook could be modified by the recent strengthening of the central planning function in the Ministry of Education. To this end, a central planning unit has just been set up, with an advisory council, and its concern is the whole system of education.

On the other hand, the possibilities for central planning grow less as the financing of activities relating to the elementary school, general upper-secondary education and leisure time education is being transferred from the state to the municipal authorities.

It must also be borne in mind that co-ordinated planning is something new and new priorities are seen to threaten certain vested interests in various sectors. Further, as we have seen, the present political climate does not favour new priorities as much as actual saving in public expenditure.

When considering new priorities as between youth education and adult education, the following - very simple - verbal equation could be a starting point :

- 25 per cent of an annual generation entering higher education is equal in cost to

- a total annual generation getting one year more education which, again, is equal in costs to
- offering the total adult population one week of education annually.

This comparison does not allow for the fact that financing lost incomes of adults on educational leave would have to exceed grants made at present for youth education. Lost incomes amount to five or ten times the costs of teaching a full-time student, and the same relationship exists between grants for young people and the adults' lost incomes. Still, the equation shows that even a modest adult educational system would demand a very substantial increase in educational costs and radically new priorities.

Chapter II

REFORMS AND REFORM PROPOSALS IN YOUTH EDUCATION

Youth education is here taken to mean upper-secondary (general or vocational) and post-secondary education, i.e. education usually undergone by young people before entering their first employment. It will be shown that reforms (actual or proposed) within these facilities are leading to some extent in the direction of recurrent education, although some uncertainty prevails as to the future lines of development.

1. Education at the upper-secondary level

Two major reforms have already been mentioned : within general upper-secondary education, the establishment of the Higher Preparatory Examination (HF), and within vocational education the experimental programmes which may lead to abolition of apprenticeship. These new types of education have so much in common that they may be combined into one comprehensive upper-secondary system.

Two years ago (in 1973) a proposal for a comprehensive general and vocational 12-year educational structure was worked out in the Ministry of Education. It was intended that Parliament should confirm the main principles of this system, and that the government, acting on these principles by administrative measures and by presenting further bills to Parliament, should implement the new structure before 1980. In the public debate following the publication of this proposal, however, some misunderstandings have developed. One is that 12 years of compulsory education was intended; another that all young people should have identical education. In fact, the proposal only intended a common framework of education after the compulsory 9 years, in other words that it should comprise general, preparatory and vocational education from the 10th to the 12th form. In short, the proposal has not yet been presented to Parliament, nor has Parliament discussed the upper-secondary educational system considered as a whole.

In discussions of post-secondary education it has been pointed out that the present system of the upper-secondary level preparing young people either for post-secondary education or for their first jobs will continue to put pressure on long-term higher education. So far as concerns a system of recurrent education, the main problems

are that one large group of young people at the age of 19 is not really prepared for the world of work and that another large group is insufficiently well prepared for further education. As long as these problems are unsolved, recurrent education will be a long way off.

2. Admission to post-secondary education

The increasing number of entrants to long-term higher education coupled with the unfavourable employment opportunities for them when they have graduated has led to a proposal for limited entry to all long-term programmes.

Traditionally, such restrictions on university intake have met with resistance : free choice of education should be a main principle governing educational policy. This main principle, however, has only been a reality at the universities. Nobody has been able to justify why there should be free entry to, for instance, the medical faculties of the universities and not to the dental colleges, which are separate institutions outside the universities.

Another objection has been that there are no fair selection criteria, although various criteria are applied and accepted at different institutions. In particular, it has been pointed out that general use of marks from upper-secondary examinations as entrance criteria for post-secondary institutions might well prevent the introduction of new teaching methods at the upper-secondary level.

At the same time as restricted entry is being discussed, consideration is being given to the introduction of more liberal admission rules in so far as these are based on the previous education of applicants - for instance, vocational experience as well as formal education should be accepted as a credit. Some, however, see a conflict of objectives as between liberalisation of admission rules and quantitative limitation of entry.

In so far as concerns a strategy of recurrent education, there need be no such conflict :

Firstly, restricted admission into long-term programmes might have a stimulating effect on the reform of upper-secondary education. In the long run, the automatic link between specific branches of upper-secondary education and higher education would have to be abolished, and vocational and general education should be combined in one comprehensive system at the upper-secondary level.

Secondly, restricted admission to long-term study-programmes would enforce the building up of short-cycle educational opportunities at the post-secondary level. These could be more adapted to the principle of recurrent education, and by their cost-saving effect would release funds for new types of education.

Thirdly, rules of admission to post-secondary education could generally favour candidates with vocational experience rather than

those coming directly from the upper-secondary level. Vocational experience after the 12th year of education might well be the general rule. This could, of course, be considered a lengthening of the total duration of youth education, but it would certainly have the effect of shortening the long-term programmes.

3. Reforms in higher education

The expansion of higher education has certainly led to an intensification of planning effort in this sector, but so far the reforms have scarcely reached the traditional universities and older institutions of higher education. As previously mentioned, their introduction has been chiefly confined to the two new University Centres.

The latest planning report - "The Planning of Post-Secondary Education in Denmark 1974-1987 : Problems, Trends and Solutions" - was published early in 1974. (1) Its main purpose was to prepare an action programme for political decisions on the principles that should inspire further development. The report gave special attention to the interrelations between numerical intake, the structure of courses offered, efficient planning of studies and resource allocations. It also considered the supply and demand of highly qualified manpower for the labour market.

This report has been presented to Parliament and discussed in its education committee, but up to the present no decisions have been taken and in consequence there are still no guidelines for the further development of post-secondary education.

In the context of recurrent education the proposals concerning the organisation and structure of studies are of special interest.

As already mentioned, the new university centres apply a new organisation and structure to the various courses of study. Study programmes of 3-4 years' duration are combined with others that take 5-6 years. The centres have three or four programmes for newcomers, lasting for one or two years and covering the fields of (a) humanities, (b) social sciences and (c) natural science and engineering. The programmes for the later stages of the study are organised in a modular way, making it possible to use the same elements in different study programmes and to create new programmes to suit the individual.

This organisation embodies the expectation that a structure with basic programmes in the introductory phase, and with graduation outlets at several stages, may lead to a reduction in the number of cases where individual students change their study programme or give up their studies before they are completed.

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1) A summary in English is available from the Ministry of Education.

The planning proposals are not intended to integrate all forms of post-secondary education in the university centres in the near future, or to introduce basic programmes as the only course of study for the newly entered, until they have proved their work in practice. On the strength of a political decision as to the principles of a reform it is, however, intended that all curricula, examination systems and syllabuses should be reconsidered with a view to clarifying the possibilities of increased efficiency, introducing differentiated graduation outlets and broadening the scope of the preliminary phases.

The basic programmes we have been considering, unfortunately have a serious disadvantage for recurrent education. They make it impossible for a student to go to a university centre for the sole purpose of taking a course or certificate in a single subject. The centres do not offer study programmes of less than three years' duration on a full time basis. The modular structure, on the other hand, provides reasonably wide opportunities for alternating study and employment. Of course this is possible, too, at the later stages in the centre's study programmes but, as already said, not in the introductory phase.

In some ways also, the university centres are centralising educational opportunities, and offering a wide scope of graduation possibilities. Outside the Copenhagen area, however, it will not be sensible to establish such centres in more than three or four cities (Århus, Odense, Alborg and perhaps Esbjerg) if proper advantage is to be taken of the economies of scale. Several post-secondary institutions (teachers' training, engineering and commercial colleges) are more decentralised, but they are often working on an un-economic scale. In contrast to Norway and Sweden, decentralisation of post-secondary education has not been a primary planning objective in Denmark, for geographical distances are relatively unimportant in this small country. Nevertheless, the result may well be that Denmark finds itself less prepared for organising post-secondary education in a recurrent way than its neighbours, because decentralising leads to a breakdown of long-term programmes, and the proximity of an educational institution is one of the essentials for alternating study and employment.

Chapter III

EXISTING ELEMENTS OF A RECURRENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

While education in a recurrent form seems far removed from the traditional gymnasium and the institutions of higher education, other parts of the educational system are more in accord with the recurrent principle. These may be priority areas for further development, and they already serve as examples of better ways of organising educational opportunities.

1. Leisure time education

Up to the present, the state has provided very liberal grants to leisure time education organised by municipal authorities or private organisations, through the reimbursement of costs incurred locally. A bill has now been presented to Parliament transferring responsibility for these costs to the local communities, while state participation in financing of leisure time education will be included in block grants to municipal authorities fixed on the basis of objective criteria such as population size, age distribution and taxpayers' income. In reality, this means that the local authorities will have the principal say in the priority given to leisure time education, although the bill stipulates some obligations and conditions of supply. One cannot predict how local financing will influence the priority given to this kind of education; but it will certainly be more difficult in the future for the central authority to establish planning priorities as between the different sectors of education. As leisure time education is of special importance to schemes for recurrent and adult education, this recent move may prove to be a serious step backwards.

Formerly all leisure time education was free to its participants. This has been called a drinking straw in the Treasury. Now, however, only qualifying courses (usually leading to examinations) and vocational courses are free of charge. Such restrictions as these diminish the flexibility of the system so far as recurrent education is concerned.

Nevertheless, in spite of these limitations, the system is of growing importance as offering a second chance for adult people who left formal schooling at an early stage. Courses giving qualification

for further education have been expanded. So long as there is no recognised educational leave of absence or a general grant scheme for adults, leisure time education must be a cornerstone in a system of recurrent education. But it has serious limitations in regard to vocational education, because of the general rule that vocational programmes already in existence in other parts of the educational system cannot be offered within the scheme for leisure time education. It therefore becomes important that vocational education at the secondary as well as at the post-secondary level should also be offered on a part-time basis. This seems a better solution than establishing similar programmes within the framework of leisure time education.

Under the Leisure Time Educational Act the state also finances special courses provided by an organisation loosely connected with the universities and other institutions of higher education called the Folk University. This organisation is independent of the university governing bodies, and its educational activities are not the same as those of the institutions. Its courses, for example, do not duplicate those in the more formal study programmes, and should be considered more of a general cultural value. They have no vocational aims examinations or certificates of proficiency.

The question is whether this Folk University might play a more important role in a system of recurrent education. Restrictions on entry-numbers in long-term study programmes could for instance lead to certificated short-cycle university courses being supplied in single subjects by the Folk University. It should be considered whether this type of external service ought not to be given university status on a par with research and long-term study programmes. Such a system would also allow a decentralisation of study programmes at university level.

2. Vocational education

It has been mentioned before that vocational education most often has a recurrent structure. Labour-market organisations have played a major role in the design and implementation of the systems, and they find that the recurrent method is attractive and flexible.

Apprenticeship, which is still the dominant first level of vocational education, applies the recurrent method by letting block-release day courses at technical or commercial colleges alternate with work experience in industry. Further educational facilities have been created to supplement this system :

i) general education for shop-stewards, foremen and supervisors,
ii) further education for up-dating of skills to changing work requirements and new technology,

iii) education for occupational promotion in a given professional field and

iv) education to facilitate inter-occupational mobility.

The first type is often organised directly by the unions. Some funds are provided under an agreement fixed by collective bargaining, others by using the system of leisure time educational finance. A special role is allocated to workers' high schools - that is folk high schools associated with the labour movement.

The second and fourth types of educational provision are organised by the Ministry of Labour, some specific courses being added for semi-skilled workers. Participants in these get state grants related to lost income or unemployment benefit.

The third type covers the usual vocational education sponsored by the Ministry of Education, basic vocational education being an entrance requirement.

In the technological field the usual basic education is the artisans' apprenticeship. The post-secondary facility covers both the so-called senior technicians' level and the level of engineers. These two levels are not, however, integrated into one system. The engineering courses for artisans are considered to be on a par with those for students, but they are given in separate colleges. In recent years enrolments to these colleges have dropped rather steeply (from about 1600 a year to about 800), whereas enrolments to the various courses for senior technicians have kept fairly steady. These trends have, of course, to be read in the light of declining numbers of young people in apprenticeship and might well change as a result of the reform of vocational education at the secondary level. Reform of the post-secondary level also is under consideration.

Business education is proving a good deal more successful - perhaps because normal school education at the secondary level provides a better background to life in commerce than in technology, and also because the difference between business education and general upper-secondary and higher education is much less pronounced than is the case for technical training. There are opportunities for transferring at various levels, and the high schools of business economics and languages at university level are open both to students and to those with a basic education of vocational type. As the business education system uses the principles of recurrent education more than most others, it is, perhaps, useful to describe it in more detail.

At secondary level a special certificate may be given as a result of apprenticeship, and a school certificate can be attained after a one-year course without apprenticeship. This level is similar to the basic year of the experimental programmes of vocational education (business field). It is expected that these arrangements for business

will become part on an integrated comprehensive system. After the first year the students may choose between a practical and a theoretical stream - both of which are provided for in the schools where a certificate at the same level as the student examination (the higher business exam) is given after 2 years further study. Certificates are also given for single subjects.

The certificates of general upper-secondary education give access to a special one-year course preparing for the higher business certificate. This certificate also gives access to social sciences studies at university. Opportunities for transfer between the systems, therefore, already exist and a growing number of students are making use of them.

At the post-secondary level the business schools offer short-cycle part-time courses, on a modular basis, in business economics and organisation. These are in very high demand.

At university level, the high schools of business economics and languages (commercial high schools) offer both study programmes with differentiated graduation outlets (i.e. different degrees for different lengths of course) and organised part-time study programmes. Apart from the new university centres, they are the only institutions of higher education in Denmark offering degrees at different levels. The explanation is that they originally started with medium-term programmes and, instead of lengthening these as the need for more knowledge and skills has developed, they have, as it were, established new steps on the ladder.

Thus, in the field of business economics two study programmes are offered, a part-time course of 4 years' duration and a full-time course with first graduation (bachelor level) after three years of education and second (master's degree) after 5 years. Beyond this, a Ph.D. is also offered.

The part-time programme is often followed by graduates from other institutions of higher education, especially by engineers.

In the field of business languages the full-time programmes lead to degrees after 2, 4 and 6 years of education.

Another significant feature of business education not shared with other forms of higher education is its decentralization. The two high schools of Copenhagen and Århus have sections associated with commercial schools in several towns that offer part-time education and the first two-year programmes in languages.

All this said, it is not surprising that the system for commercial education has been taken as a model for other new types of education. One example is the education offered for Computer Science or Administrative Data Processing (ADP). This is built up on a recurrent principle. The first level is integrated in the new experimental programmes of vocational education, starting with the basic year (business field) followed by a two-year specialised programme.

A vocational certificate is thus obtained after a total of 12 years of education. The certificates of general upper-secondary education give access to a one-year course awarding the same certificate.

Computer occupations will still be dominated for some years, however, by people with only on-the-job training and instruction arranged by the hardware suppliers. It is estimated that about 5000 people are employed in such occupations at a skilled level without any relevant formal education. It is important that these people should not become a "computer-proletariat" once a scheme for formal education in the subject comes into being. It is also necessary that those with a basic certificate should have the means to extend their knowledge and skills.

It has therefore been decided that a modular system at the post-secondary level should be established to serve both those with and without a formal certificate. If restriction of entry proves necessary, applicants with vocational experience would be favoured. The total duration of the modules at this level taken consecutively on a full-time basis will be two years, but it is intended that students should take the modules they actually need in terms of their present jobs or promotion possibilities. The Danish educational system has a propensity towards forcing people to continue in the system only to get some kind of certificate or degree. In the new system the only "certificate" one can get is actually having completed modules corresponding to a half year of education at the full-time rate - no prize, in fact, for the "degree hunter".

This computer education will be established with part-time courses principally in mind; it should be possible, however, to follow them on a full-time basis. Another innovation, along the lines of the British "Open University", will be the provision of distant study programmes depending upon written materials and correspondence.

If students want to continue their studies after this type of short-cycle post-secondary education, they will have to transfer to institutions of higher education. The intention is that credit should be given for the total time spent at post-secondary level.

3. Further education of teachers

The elementary school has always been an object of much interest to the public and to Parliament in Denmark. Its teachers have a higher school status than is usual in other countries, perhaps because it is a profession that has been equally sought by men and women. Further the Teachers' Union has a very powerful say in matters of educational policy. The existence of a highly developed system of further education for teachers in elementary schools is thus not surprising.

The basic education of teachers for elementary schools is given at 29 teachers' training colleges. The entry requirement is a general upper-secondary certificate, and the full course lasts from three-and-a-half to four years.

Further education for these teachers is organised by the High School of Educational Studies - a university level institution. It offers two main types of programme - one-year part-time courses and 3-year programmes giving graduation at master's level. Courses of less than one year are also arranged. The courses and programmes cover the field of general pedagogy and psychology and all teaching subjects in the elementary school except a few that are covered in a different way (e.g. gymnastics, woodwork).

A striking feature about this facility is the high participation it attracts. The annual enrolment to the one-year courses alone is 25 per cent of the total number of teachers. This corresponds to every teacher taking a course every fourth year. Even so, it has not been possible to satisfy the whole of the demand and many applicants are refused every year.

Several explanations of this high participation rate can be offered :

Firstly, the teachers are well-educated and very education-conscious.

Secondly, the state refunds salaries for substitute teachers to the municipal authorities to the number of 600 full-time teachers a year, and, in addition to this, the municipal school authorities allow reductions in the numbers of lessons required of teachers participating in the one-year courses. It is not known to what extent participants actually benefit from this intention, but it is believed that most of them obtain some reduction in their work load.

Thirdly, the courses themselves are decentralised to sub-centres of the School of Educational Studies located at such places that all teachers can follow them and attend to their own work as well. Teaching lessons do not, of course, take up the whole of a working day.

This further educational facility for elementary school teachers shows how popular such a system can be with a well-educated group, given favourable conditions in the reduction of work load and the proximity of the places where the courses are held. It should be noted that no similar system exists for teachers at upper-secondary level or other groups of highly qualified personnel. Such people are usually referred to courses arranged by their own organisations, but the growth in numbers of these courses indicates not only a large demand, but a willingness among employers to stand the cost of further education and to grant leave of absence to graduates.

Unfortunately, there are no statistics on which to evaluate individual participation in this system of further education. So, it is not known if the same teachers are following courses every year, or if some are taking no advantage of the facility at all. As, politically, the further education of teachers is given high priority, it ought to be known whether in practice a system of this kind should depend on voluntary participation.

Chapter IV

FINANCING RECURRENT EDUCATION

Specific arrangements for grants in short-cycle labour-market education and teachers' further education have already been mentioned. In other cases, adults have to resort to the system of youth grants or part-time education if they want further learning.

Formal part-time education only exists in the system of leisure time education (where opportunities for obtaining certificates are somewhat limited) and, sometimes, in the system of vocational education at post-secondary level. It is also possible to follow university courses on a part-time basis, but there are no organised arrangements specially for part-time students. For courses planned to take 5-5 1/2 years full-time, part-time study can soon become overwhelming.

The system of youth educational grants is based on the principle of covering the living costs of young people on a modest scale. Support from the state - half of which is a grant and half a loan with zero interest during the period of education - is dependent upon the income of the student (for married couples, on the income of the partner also) and the income of his parents if he is under 23 years of age. In addition to these grants, and unrelated to income, the state also guarantees loans for students in private banks at the current rate of interest. To save on state expenditure, the former government presented a bill to Parliament with a view to transferring the state loans into state-guaranteed bank loans. This bill is expected to be passed, in which case more severe conditions of repayment should be anticipated.

Already, these grants and loans are insufficient to support a modest standard of living for young people. For adults used to a standard of living based on working income and with financial obligations towards their families, they are even less adequate. Additionally, the repayment burdens after a long-term education are also very heavy.

The present government is considering a total reform of the system based on income-related repayment of total grants, but in view of the opinion in the present majority, it is not expected that this proposal will be carried through. A serious obstacle is the usual way of looking upon public finances in Denmark.

The principal concern is to reduce the sum total in the Budget for the coming fiscal year. Thus, transferring state loans into state guaranteed loans to the full extent is considered a saving on public expenditure. At the same time, it cannot be considered a saving to transfer grants into state loans with income-related repayment because this will not reduce the total of next year's Budget. Taking these limitations into account, it would be rash to take an optimistic view on the future financing of adult education.

A year and a half ago, a very modest proposal for improving financial support for adult education was suggested by a commission appointed by the Minister of Labour. It was that the system covering short-cycle labour-market education organised by the Ministry of Labour should be extended on an experimental scale to cover other forms of education. Eligibility for support related to former income or unemployment benefits should rest on three conditions :

i) the applicant should be 25 years of age or have had at least 4 years of vocational employment;

ii) the further education proposed should considerably improve the applicant's employment possibilities, and it was assumed that he would get a permanent job in a field of employment related to the courses he would be taking and one in need of manpower; and

iii) the education sought should not take more than 12 months. A limit should be set on the total number of people receiving these allowances, and the system should be managed by the local labour exchange office.

Even though this proposal has very limited scope so far as adult education is concerned, no bill for its enactment has yet been presented to Parliament. It may be assumed that even the very modest costs attendant on the proposal have provided the obstacle in view of the general opinion on public savings; nevertheless a changed attitude might have been expected on account of the present rather high rate of unemployment.

Compared with the fate of this very modest proposal, a report on further education, issued at the same time by The Planning Council of Higher Education, appears like a dream of the future. This report was prepared by a sub-committee of the council, and published, not so much as a proposal, but as a basis for discussion.

Its main subject is further education for highly qualified personnel. However, the committee took into account that further education must be considered a need for the whole adult population. The special case of highly qualified manpower was therefore seen within a system of legal or collective bargaining rights of educational leave of absence for all adults. The main principle should be that

people in employment earn educational leave of absence in proportion to the time they have spent at work. This leave should be financed through a fund created from employers' contributions, while the responsibility for providing a suitable supply of educational opportunities should lie with the State.

Within this framework, the committee recommended for the further education of highly qualified manpower that unions by collective bargaining (especially with the state) should secure the rights of educational leave, and that the state should provide funds for further education of graduates at institutions of higher education. It was maintained that such further education of highly qualified manpower could not await provision of further education for the adult population as a whole.

It is worth noticing that the report touches only lightly on the possibilities of shortening initial higher education as a way of supplying courses for further education. In "The Plan of Post-Secondary Education in Denmark 1974-1987" (1) it was calculated that an average reduction of only 0.4 of a year of long-term education could in fact provide a supply of further education corresponding to one week a year for the total population of graduates in employment. In a working life of 40 years, this would mean a total of one year of education.

The explanation why only 0.4 of a year's reduction in initial education should provide one year of further education is the continuous growth in the total number of graduates. One could also use the opposite argument that transferring one year of education from initial to further education of graduates would save half a year of education per graduate. The savings would be even greater if further education was provided only for those graduates who had had a reduced period of higher education under the new scheme. Of course, these calculations are valid only for a limited span of time, but in Denmark such savings would continue at least until the year 2000.

If further education for graduates is not to be financed by a reduction of the time spent on initial higher education, it ought to be asked whether further education of highly qualified manpower should have priority before the needs of adults with less initial education are satisfied. The report on further education from The Planning Council does not discuss such matters as this.

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1) See also page 26.

Chapter V

KEY ELEMENTS OF A STRATEGY FOR RECURRENT EDUCATION

This report has taken a rather pessimistic view of the possibilities of changing educational patterns in the near future, pointing out the inflexibility that results from tradition and vested interest. Visions of equality in educational opportunities must be tempered by the realities of what has been achieved during a period of expansion and then retrenchment in public expenditure.

Even though changes will probably be carried through in the direction of redistribution between initial and further education, there is no certainty that the result will be a redistribution as between individuals. The fundamental problem is the disparity between those taking advantage of, and claiming, more education and those to whom its existing forms mean little or nothing. For a solution to this problem, we are groping in the dark.

It is thus important that every step forward in the process of educational reform should be kept under close surveillance as to the extent it fulfills a social objective.

Our somewhat pessimistic view should not, however, discourage those who would try to turn the trend. Summing up the proposals and suggestions to which we have referred above, the key elements of a strategy for recurrent education should cover the following items :

- The major aims of youth education should be to ensure for everybody sufficient education to demand further education when needs arise, to introduce an alternating pattern between education and employment and to re-apportion the financial load in favour of adult education.
- A reform of upper-secondary education should thus be directed at capturing those young people who have found little of value in the existing educational opportunities and at preparing them for employment and for further education in a balanced way.
- A common framework for upper-secondary education should be established and experimental programmes of different types carried out with a view to the elaboration of a comprehensive system.

- Automatic admission rights from upper-secondary to long-term post-secondary education should be reconsidered, and vocational experience should be an important criterion in gaining access to post-secondary education.
- Long-term study programmes should be broken down to permit differentiated graduation outlets and certificates in single subjects. Special attention must be given to part-time and short-cycle courses. The system of post-secondary education should equally serve youth and the adult population.
- The system of leisure time education should be further developed in the direction which gives qualifications, and programmes should correspond with the actual demands among adults. Attention should be given to programmes offered at places of work in working hours and other untraditional types of education.
- An extension of educational grants must favour adults with, for instance, less than 12 years of education and secure a level of allowance sufficient to maintain a standard of living comparable with that attained during employment. At the post-secondary level, loans with income-related repayment might replace the present system of grants.

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